

COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

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"The interposition of the City of London was not necessary for inducing me to direct due inquiry to be made into a transaction, which has disappointed the hopes and expectations of the nation."—KING'S ANSWER TO THE CITIZENS OF LONDON.

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SUMMARY OF POLITICS.

COURT OF INQUIRY.—Of this Court, or Board, or whatever else the ministers and the members may choose to call it, it may be truly said, and I do say it without grudging, that it has *not* “disappointed the hopes and expectations of the nation;” for, in this whole kingdom, there was not **one** living soul, who expected from it any thing satisfactory. —The *Report* of the members will be found in another part of this sheet; which report, after a very dull narrative of facts, with which every one was *before acquainted*, concludes with the expression of an *unanimous* opinion, that **no** further military inquiry or proceeding, relative to the conduct of any of the generals, concerned in the transaction, is necessary; and that for this very curious reason, that they had, during the whole of the service, discovered great.....great what? Great *courage* and *skill*? No: but great “*zeal* and *firmness*.” —A man who simply utters his opinion has afterwards to be heard as to his reasons for that opinion; but, here we have both the opinion and the reason; and such a reason, such a ground, for such a decision, was, I am fully persuaded, never heard of before, since any thing like judicial inquiries have made a part of the practices of mankind.

—What the nation deemed a great military fault, or crime, had been committed; a great national wrong had been deemed to have been done by some one of three generals, or by all the three together; the king, after waiting for the calls of his people, causes a board of General Officers to be assembled to inquire into the matter; and, as the acts, which were deemed criminal, consisted of an *Armistice* and a *Convention*, they were charged to ascertain, and to state to the king, what was the nature of those acts, the fact of the acts having been committed by the parties being notorious and undeniable. Now, who would not have expected from these generals an expression of their opinion upon the nature of those acts? Who would not have expected to see the Report concluded with a regular deduction from the evidence, as to this particular

point? Who would not have expected these men, versed in the art military, to say, “from this evidence, it appears to us, ‘that the acts were good (or bad); and ‘that, therefore, we think, that no fur-‘ther, (or some further) proceedings are ‘necessary, in this case?’ Who would not have expected a decision in this way? Instead of which, we have, and the king has been mortified, not to say insulted, with a heavy narrative of transactions, before known in substance, and quite uninteresting and fatiguing in the detail; to which narrative is added no decision, or opinion, with regard to the acts, which the whole nation had deemed a wrong done to its interest and its honour; and yet, we are told, by these same inquirers, that *no further* proceedings are necessary; because, during the whole of the service, great “*zeal* and *firmness*” were displayed by the parties accused.—If, indeed, those parties had been accused of a want of *zeal* or *firmness*, then there would have been some sense in this decision; but, they were accused of no such thing. *Zeal* and *firmness* are mere qualities of the mind. These generals were accused of *acts*; of what, in the jargon of the law, are called *overt acts*; of what, in plain language, are rightly called, *open* and *visible acts*: namely, the making of an *Armistice* and a *Convention*. What had their general *zeal* and *firmness*, supposing them to possess those mental qualities, and to have displayed them in Portugal, to do with the commission of these acts? The Court might as well have reported, that they found Sir Arthur Wellesley and his associates to have been excellent *psalm singers*, and that, *therefore*, they saw no necessity for any further proceedings, relative to the *Conventions*, which those gentlemen had made in Portugal. The absurdity of such a reason would have been a little more flagrant than that given by the Court of Inquiry; but, it would not, in the smallest degree, have been more absurd in reality. If a man, accused of *high-way robbery* were to be acquitted upon the ground of his having a black or a yellow beard, the acquittal would not be less con-

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sonant with reason, than was the decision now under our observation. Any thing so preposterous has, surely, never before made its appearance under the sun — In this light it, at once, appeared to the Duke of York, who, as will be seen by his letter, sets the board to work again, and explicitly asks them for their opinion respecting the Armistice and the Convention. Now, then, they are obliged to speak in intelligible language. The majority say, *without giving any reasons*, that they approve of both; two of the members say, that they disapprove of the Convention; and one of them, Lord Moira, giving very satisfactory reasons for his disapprobation, disapproves of both those acts. Yet, only a few days before, these members, as well as the majority of the Court, had set their hands to a Report, which concluded, with an expression of their unanimous opinion, that no further proceedings, against the parties accused, were necessary. The majority of the Court; that is to say, those members who approved of the acts, might, by possibility, have, in their minds, good reasons for their decision on both days; their conduct was, at least, consistent; but, where will the public find, where will it look for, arguments to make out the consistency of the disapproving members, especially that of the Earl of Moira; who, to-day, gives most excellent reasons for his disapprobation of the acts committed, who shews that those acts were injurious to the nation and its allies; who also shews, that there was no necessity for committing them; and who further shews, that the plain path of duty led directly another way: where shall we seek for the consistency of him, who, to-day, does this, and who, but yesterday, declared, that no further proceedings against the parties were necessary? — Such has been the result of this far-famed Court of Inquiry with all its solemnity and all its bupcles, its bales, of evidence. I said, at the outset, that its proceedings would exceed in bulk the Old and New Testaments; and, the court news-writers now inform us, that the Duke of York took down the papers, to Windsor, in his travelling carriage, they consisting of two packages of twenty pounds weight each, written, of course, upon about seventy or eighty quires of foolscap paper. This is to be our "satisfaction," is it? Each of the petitioning counties is to have a quire or two, is it, of these precious, and dearly purchased papers? — The Question now is, *what will the people do?* At almost, if not all, the meetings, where the Address to the king for inquiry met with opposition, it was declared

by the opposers, that, if a satisfactory investigation did not take place, they would be amongst the foremost to petition the king for such an investigation. Well, then, will they say, that this investigation is satisfactory? Will any one man, of any pretensions to integrity, dare to say this, in the face of those who know him, and whom he is liable to meet again? Will any such person say, that, either in the kind or constitution of the Court; or in its proceedings, or its Report, he can see any thing to satisfy him? Will any such man say, that a Court, consisting of unsworn members; having to examine unsworn witnesses; without any power to compel either the giving of evidence or even of attendance; the witnesses being all, more or less, parties concerned; and the questions put in writing, with time in abundance allowed for the several witnesses to frame their answers and previously to confer with each other upon all and every point: Will any man, pretending to character for integrity, seriously say, that an acquittal by such a Court, so proceeding, is, or can be, satisfactory to his mind? — Come, then, you, who before opposed petitions for inquiry, and let us hear what ground it is, upon which you will now oppose petitions for an inquiry of a more efficient nature. Is this that has taken place all that you expected, or wished for? You said the contrary. You told us, that satisfactory inquiry was promised; and, in order to silence us, you asserted, that that promise ought to be looked upon as *the king's*, and not as his *ministers'*; and that, to appear to doubt its sincerity was to insult the king, "in his old age;" the king's age having, according to your ideas of the constitution, very much to do with the matter. We, who imputed the Answer, given to the City of London; we who imputed this answer to the ministers, have no scruple to say, that "due inquiry" has not been made; that the implied promise, advised by the ministers, has not been kept and fulfilled; we say, and you cannot deny, that the report, that the result is not satisfactory; and, therefore, if all our small remains of spirit and of national feeling have not evaporated, we shall now put your sincerity to the test. — Will you now oppose a petition, not upon the ground that you are satisfied, but that the matter has been taken up by, and ought to be left in the hands of, the king? Why, this argument, if admitted here, would be good against almost every petition, which, upon any occasion, could be drawn up, or of which an idea could be formed. It would have been full as good against the City of



London, before any promise of inquiry had been made; for, was not the matter already in the hands of the king? Suppose a proclamation to be issued for the cutting off of all our ears, would you not petition against it, because the matter was in the hands of the king? Would you quietly have your ears cut off, rather than trouble the king with your "interference"? I know you will say, "yes," if the pulling out of a tooth or two were added, provided your sinecures and contracts were left untouched; but, that can never be the general taste.— To suppose it to be an insult to the king to request him to do that which he has power to do, and does not do, is of the very essence of slavery. It is, at once, to give up, to censure, to stigmatize, the vital principles of the constitution of England. Every man, be he who or what he may, has a right to petition the king; that is to say, he has the right, not only to state to the king what he thinks to be a wrong done, or about to be done, to him individually, or to the community, of which he is a member, but also to complain of that wrong, and to ask for redress. The wrong, (real or imaginary no matter about that) if of a public nature, must necessarily proceed from some person, or persons, having his or their authority from the king; with the king it rests to reprove, or punish, those who abuse the trust with which he invests them; so that, if it be to insult the king; if to ask him to use his power in this way; if this be to insult him by imputing to him a want of discernment or of justice; if this be to "insult our good king, in his old age;" why, then, there is, at once, an end to the right of petition, guaranteed to the subject by so many acts of parliament, established by so many hundreds of legal precedents; this boasted right, this last resort of the suffering subjects, is become a farce, and a farce not at all the less despicable on account of its solemnity.—We often see petitions presented to the parliament against bills pending before it. The people, or a part of them, think that what they learn is about to be passed into a law will be injurious to them; and, they pray the parliament, that the same may not become a law. But, do we ever hear one of these petitions called an "insult" to the parliament? Do we hear it imputed to the petitioners, that they question the discernment, or the justice, of either of the Houses? Yet, the parliament have "taken the mat—'ter up"; the thing is in their hands; and quite as completely as the affair of the Conventions is now in the hands of the king.

When an *impeachment* has been before the House of Commons; when the House has proceeded upon it; when it is in the course of proceeding further, or when it has stayed its proceedings: in these cases, under these circumstances, the people present petitions to the House, praying it to go on, and to do this, or that, in the affair, according to the views and opinions of the petitioners. This is a case exactly in point; yet, we have never heard the petitioners, in such a case, accused of insulting the House, and of casting upon it insinuations of a want of knowledge or of integrity.—Whence, then, this new doctrine about *insulting the king*, because we humbly pray him to do that which appears to us to be for the public good, and which it is not denied that he has the power to do?—The fact is, that this doctrine is a mere pretence, invented for the sole purpose of screening ministers, or their favourites and supporters, and totally void of feeling of respect for, or attachment to, the person, or the office of the king, whose name is thus abused, whose dignity is thus vilified, and the hearts of whose subjects must, if this doctrine were to succeed, be thus completely alienated. Establish this doctrine, and you, at once, cut off all valuable and esteemed communication between king and people; as flatterers, as slaves, they may still approach him; but, never for that purpose, that *sole* purpose, the answering of which can make them value the kingly office; never for the purpose of obtaining redress for the past, or security for the future, can they again address him, and the loyal sentiment of the poet, "I flee from petty 'tyrants to the throne," becomes a ranting and senseless exclamation.—The Report of the Court of Inquiry has, in no wise, changed my opinion as to the nature of the Armistice and Convention; and, I think, that so it is with the public in general. It still appears, that Sir Arthur Wellesley says he could have pursued and shut up Junot with only 13,000 men; that Junot had only 14,000 men in the field when he made his attack and was repulsed; that, as to the rest of Junot's army, they were not soldiers fit for battle, but mere *Bocram men*, who must have been a burthen to him; that our army was in no real want, or in any danger of being in want of provisions; that it consisted of 35,000 men before the Convention was signed; and, that, therefore, the Convention was injurious and disgraceful, and the Armistice still more injurious and disgraceful. The fatal consequences of these acts are now evident. It is impossible to believe, that if we had captured the whole of Junot's army, the im-

pression in Spain would not have been very different from what it has been ; and that, as to Portugal, we should not, in that case, have been upon quite another footing than what we now are. It is clear, that, since the signing of the Convention, the Portuguese have disliked our army ; that they have harboured suspicions injurious to it ; they have wished it away ; in short, that they have been very little better than open enemies. How different would all this have been ; how different would the impression have been in all Europe, and particularly in *Ireland*, if we had brought Junot and his army *prisoners to England* ; which no one denies that we could have done, all the dispute being about the pitiful circumstance of time ; three weeks sooner, or three weeks later. That army, which we have carried to France, and there put down, ready equipped for battle ; that army, which is now actually in Spain, and which may, possibly assist in capturing the very men, before whom they fled at Vimeira ; that army, it is now evident to every one, might have been safely lodged in the prisons of England, while the Russian fleet was brought prizes and their crews prisoners to Spithead, instead of the latter being carried, at our expence, to fight against our ally in the Baltic ; all this, it is now evident, might have been done, without, in the smallest degree, retarding any assistance that we had to give to the Spaniards. And yet, we are told, by this Court of Inquiry, that nothing beyond their unmeaning, and, in part, contradictory Report, is necessary to give us satisfaction ; while, on the other hand, with lungs of Stentor and with front of brass, the hireling writers of the day are calling upon us for new and greater sacrifices in support of this "just and necessary war." *Cavalry and artillery ! Good God ! As if we did not pay for enough ! An army that cost for the last year, upwards of twenty millions of pounds sterling, out of which above four millions went for ordnance ; such endless trains of horses and waggons and equipage of all sorts ; a country full of barracks and magazines and laboratories ; every town full of soldiers and horses ; the drum and the trumpets stunning us, and the country shaded with clouds of military dust from April to October : and, with all these means, with all this warlike parade and bustle and clutter and expence before our eyes, are we, in good earnest, to be quieted, by being told, that our army of 25,000 men failed to capture 14,000 Frenchmen for the want of horse and artillery, and that, too, in a country where, it is notorious, all the people were our friends, and all the en-*

mies of the French ? If so ; if we really are thus to be quieted, it matters very little who are our commanders, who are our rulers, or what either of them do. Tell us not that the horses were at Chichester or at Cork, and that the cannon were at Woolwich. What is that to us ? They should have been where they were wanted. It was the business of some of you to see that they were there. You had a thousand ships of war at your command ; the transports for the year will cost us two millions of pounds sterling ; you might have shipped off one half of the whole nation in the ships at your command ; and now you tell us a whining story about a want of horse and artillery. What are your bickerings to us ? What is it to us, who amongst you are to blame ? It is some of you. You have an army, be it what it may, that costs us 23 millions a year ; and, after all, where is this army ? If Spain was to be defended, why was not this army in Spain, time enough to meet Buonaparte ? What is this army for ? For what do we pay all this money ; this sum, at the contemplation of which the brain turns ? Where is it wanted but where the enemy is to be met and fought ?

— These, and the like, are the proper questions for the people of England to put. It is not for us to be amused with tales of wants ; a want of this, or a want of that. Where 23 millions a year is paid for the support of an army, that army should want nothing, especially in the day of battle. It is quite beneath us ; it is to assist in abusing and cheating ourselves, to enter at all into the squabbles between ministers and generals. It signifies not a straw to us who is to blame. The blame, where there is any, is amongst them ; and we have a right to complain, and to expect redress.— This is my view of the matter. The petition that I would present to the king, should express, or be built upon, sentiments like these. I would complain to him, that, after all our sacrifices for the support of such an immense military establishment, I saw little attempted against the enemy, and less effected ; that, whenever the army was concerned, there generally appeared some deficiency in those things for which we pay so dearly ; that the time for action seemed, in almost every instance, to have passed by before we began to act ; that the armies of the conqueror of Europe were distinguished by a conduct exactly the contrary ; that to oppose him with effect it seemed requisite for us to adopt a new line of conduct ; and that, before all other things, it appeared necessary to cause a further and more efficient inquiry to be made into the causes of the

late Conventions in Portugal.—Who is there that does not entertain these sentiments? Not a man in the whole kingdom, who can be said to entertain any sentiments at all upon the subject; and, I verily believe, that there are none, (except a few wretched parasites) who, in *private* conversation, will affect to entertain different sentiments thereon. But, when it comes to *speaking out*; when it comes to voting, or even holding up hands; then you perceive, at once, the effect of that chain of dependence, which the Whigs of the Revolution first forged by means of the funding and taxing system, and which has been, in subsequent, and especially in recent times, so strengthened, and so lengthened, as to embrace and hold fast, or to shackle, at least, almost every soul in society. Were it not for this, is it possible, that we should see the torpor that now prevails? Is there any instance, in any part of our history, no matter under what trace of kings, of the people's appearing so insensible to their situation as they appear at this moment? Were there ever before found Englishmen so base as to defend acts such as are now openly defended? How this will and must end, and that, too, at no very distant day, unless a salutary constitutional reform speedily take place, it is much easier to foresee than it is safe to describe.—Whether the people should now petition the king, or the parliament, may be a question with some; though, for my own part, I should certainly be for the former, as well as for the latter. But, that those who petitioned before are bound to do it now, I think, nobody will attempt to deny. All the former motives still exist, with the addition of those which naturally arise out of what has since taken place, in relation to the subject, both at home and abroad. By bringing the matter before parliament, we shall see who, in that body, will stand up in defence of the Conventions; and, what is of far greater importance, we shall ascertain in what degree the House of Commons, the people's House of Parliament, *participate in the feelings of the people*, it being impossible for the most impudent man in existence to deny, that, upon the subject of the Portugal Conventions, the people of England were, and are, unanimous in a feeling of indignation.

SPANISH REVOLUTION.—One of the newspapers has observed, that the intelligence from Spain is of a "mixed nature; " a good deal *chequered*." I must confess, that I can, after a pretty attentive perusal of all the public, and of some private, intelligence, perceive none of this chequer-

work. It all appears to me very plain; and much too plain to give me any portion of that "*sincere satisfaction*," which an editor of last evening appears to have felt, or, that he has, at least, done his best to make his readers feel.—In ROMANA's powers and proclamation I see much of dread and of despair, but not a glimpse of confidence or of hope; and, I see still less of either in the "*oath*" not to surrender Cadiz and the fleet. I remember the *oath of Potsdam*, and, remembering it, I must beg to be excused, if I entertain a strong suspicion of the efficacy of oaths as opposed to the arms of Buonaparté.—The stories, indeed, from Spain are of a "mixed nature;" for those which come from Corunna widely differ from those which come from other ports not in the hands of the enemy. But, why should we *deceive ourselves*? This is the foolishest of all things; and I am utterly astonished, that such prints as the *Times* and the *Morning Chronicle*, for instance, should publish as intelligence, unaccompanied with suitable comment, statements of facts, which their editors must know to be false, the effect of which must be to aggravate the public disappointment.—The news from Corunna talks of a *desperate defence of Madrid*, and gives us the detail, with all the coolness imaginable, just about a week after we have received the account of Madrid's having surrendered at discretion.— "Oh!" says the *loyal* man, "what, you believe the Corsican's bulletins, do you?" Yes. I do believe them; and you shall have my reason for it, in a few words. I have read these bulletins during three wars; not three campaigns; but three distinct wars, each of them ending in the conquest of kingdoms, or principalities; and, though, as to little matters of detail, they have sometimes been incorrect, or false, if you like that word better, they have uniformly proved *substantially true*, to the woeful experience of those, who, as well as ourselves, have affected to treat them as lies. *Loyalty*, as was observed a week or two ago; your true modern loyalty, consists, in part, of a little fingering in the public purse; but another essential ingredient of it is, a total disbelief in any of the victories of Buonaparté, till, like a thunder clap, they break over our heads, after having been kept off as long as possible by means, such as those used by Messrs. Ward and Huskisson previous to that terrific clap, the battle of Austerlitz.—I am satisfied, that we are the most credulous nation, particularly the Cockney part of us, of any at this day existing in the

world. The Spanish peasants, it is true, believe that the Dolls, stuck up in their village chapels, work miracles in the cure of tooth-ache, rheumatism, incontinence, sterility, and other cases; but, then, those Dolls are made in Holland; whereas we swallow the byrefaced lies, which are fabricated here at home, and fabricated too, in so slovenly a manner as not to cover any part of the hook. Fish in the river St. John are so eager for the bait, that, after the first time, they will bite at, and swallow, the naked wire; but, we, still more eager, want no bait at all. We take in, with great self-complacency, lie after lie during the whole of a campaign; and when, at last, by a long series of defeats and disgraces, Buonaparte has conquered another kingdom, we talk about the result with just as little surprize as if it had come gradually upon us through the channel of truth. Now, what sense is there in this? A great deal of *modern loyalty* there, doubtless, is; but, what *sense* is there in it? — To give any opinion as to what will be the result of the engagement, or engagements, towards which, apparently, our army, in Spain, was, when the last intelligence came away, fast approaching, would be foolish; because, in fact, we *knew* just nothing at all about either the relative strength, or relative position of the hostile armies. All that I can decidedly express upon the subject is a wish, and that wish is, that whenever and wherever and against whomsoever Englishmen fight they may be victorious; but, I must confess, that this wish is accompanied, in the present instance, with most serious apprehensions. The movements of our troops have hitherto, if our intelligence be correct, been quite unaccountable; and, as to Sir David Baird's Proclamation of the 1st of December, I trust it will prove to be a forgery; for, if true, it will require more than a whole life of glory to wipe it away. There are, perhaps, few persons who have stronger reasons than I have to be anxious about the safe return of the individuals composing that part of our army; but, much rather than hear of their sneaking out of Spain without daring to look the French in the face, I would hear of their being, to the last man, cut to pieces upon the plain. "No tears are so sweet as those which he—
"dew the unburi'd head of the soldier;" and no stain so soul as that of military cowardice. To draw off, leaving the Spanish peasants, whom we had encouraged to take up arms; to skulk away, at the approach of the French, still encouraging those poor creatures to expose themselves to the

sabres of which we were afraid, and to do this, too, under a false pretence! Oh, God! it would have been an act of infamy, the very thought of bearing a share of which would turn one wild. I hope, nay, I trust I may say, that I am sure, that there is not one single native of this kingdom, who does not contemplate such an act with inexpressible horror. Every other evil, when compared with this, is a blessing. Therefore, let what will happen else, slaughter, capture, total destruction; any thing is consoling in exchange for this. The country may lose the flower of its army, and individuals amongst us may lose brothers and sons and fathers and friends; but, neither the dead nor the living will be stained with that dishonour, which, to a mind rightly constructed, would have rendered life insupportable. The very worst of all our acts, during the last war, was the abandonment of the French Emigrants at Guadalupe. I trust we shall never see the like repeated. I know not their philosophy at the Horse Guards, or at the Military College; but, I know that it ought to teach, that one part of the duty, which a soldier owes his country, is, *to die*, and that, too, at any time when his death will be more serviceable than his life, which is always the case when the choice lies between death and the chance of dishonour. If a man cannot sit down, by the side of his wife surrounded with his children, and coolly screw his mind up to this pitch, his money, intended for the purchase of commissions, he would do well to apply to the purchase of "consols," or of sugar and plums, to be sold by retail.—I hope, there will come some circumstance to explain; satisfactorily to explain, the cause of Sir David Baird's Proclamation, if it should prove to be authentic; but, I must confess, that it is with extreme reluctance, that I admit even the possibility of its being genuine.—If our army should gain a battle, though against only a comparative small part of the French force, it may have a wonderful effect upon the Spaniards, and may lead to important results; but, unless the people be completely *let loose*; unless the war assume a revolutionary turn, still, in my opinion, Buonaparte will prevail. It appears to me to be morally impossible, that he should be beaten by any other means. The only article of really cheering news that I can collect out of all that I have lately read about the operations in Spain, is contained in one of Buonaparte's bulletins. It is that in which he says, that all the *respectable*, or *gentle*, people are for him, and none but

the *rabble* against him. This language of his being exactly like that of our peculators and plunderers, there is some ground to hope, that he has all these on his side, in Spain, and, of course, that the people are against him. The Morning Chronicle has, with much acuteness, noticed this exhilarating circumstance, and has observed, that, if the fact be so, it is a little awkward for the doctrine of those amongst us, who are so eager to contend, that the people, or rabble, as they call them, are every where the allies of Buonaparte. But, my great fear is, that the peculators are against him, and that the "rabble" are for him.— Some persons, anticipating a failure in Spain, are making for themselves a consolation in the new possessions and sovereignty, that we shall, in that case, have in the Spanish colonies, including, of course, all the gold and silver mines. I beseech them to dismiss this busy devil from their thoughts; for, in the first place, we should not get those possessions and that sovereignty without long and bloody wars; and, in the next place, they would, if we had them, be an addition to the many burthensome colonies we already have. They would, in short, be *another East-Indies*, and that is, in one compound word, to express all manner of national corruptions, calamities, and curses.

Westminster, 5th January, 1809.

OFFICIAL PAPERS.

CONVENTION IN PORTUGAL.—*Report of the Board of Inquiry to the King, dated Dec. 22, 1808. Also the subsequent Proceedings of the said Board.*

May it please your majesty.—We the under-written general officers of the army, in obedience to your majesty's warrant, which bears date the 1st day of November, 1808, commanding us strictly to inquire into the conditions of a *suspension of arms*, concluded on the 22d of August, 1808, between your majesty's army in Portugal, and the French force in that country—and also into a definitive convention, concluded with the French general commanding on the 31st August following—also into all the causes and circumstances (whether arising from the previous operation of the British army, or otherwise which led to them)—and into the conduct, behaviour and proceedings of lieutenant general sir Hew Dalrymple, and such other commander or commanders of your majesty's forces in Portugal—and of any other person or persons, as far as the same were connected with the said armistice, suspension of arms, and convention—and

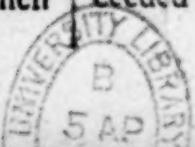
to report to your majesty a state thereof, as it shall appear, together with our opinion thereon, and also our opinion, whether any, and what farther proceedings should be had thereupon.—We have, at several meetings, perused and considered your majesty's orders and instructions, as transmitted to us by the right hon. lord Castlereagh, your majesty's principal secretary of state, together with sundry letters, and other papers, therewith transmitted: and have heard and examined lieutenant general sir Hew Dalrymple, Sir Harry Burrard, and Sir Arthur Wellesley, and other principal officers employed on the said expedition, with such witnesses as any of them desired: and also such other persons as seemed to us most likely to give any material information: and in order that your majesty may be fully possessed of every circumstance which has appeared in the course of this inquiry,— We beg leave to lay before your majesty the whole of our examinations and proceedings to this our report annexed. And upon the most diligent and careful review of the whole matter, we do, in further obedience to your royal command, most humbly report to your majesty,—That it appears that early in the month of May, 1808, a very considerable force destined for foreign service, was assembled near Cork, the command of which, it is imagined, was intended for Sir Arthur Wellesley—That in the month of May, universal and unexpected resistance to French tyranny had taken place in Spain—That application was made for the assistance of Britain, and that government with the universal concurrence of the country, determined on giving Spain and Portugal, then also in commotion, the most effectual aid.—It appears, that in consequence of such determination major general Spencer, before the surrender of the French fleet at Cadiz, was off that port with about 5,000 men, sent by sir Hew Dalrymple from Gibraltar. His assistance not having been called for there, he proceeded to the mouth of the Tagus, with a view of aiding sir Charles Cotton's fleet in forcing a passage; it having been represented that there were not in the forts and about Lisbon, more than four thousand men. But general Spencer being then off the Tagus (June 24) reports from the best authority he could have, that the enemy had 11,000 men in and about Lisbon, and 9,500 at St. Ubes, the east of Portugal, and elsewhere. In this situation the intended attack could not take place, and general Spencer returned to Cadiz and Gibraltar.— It appears that on the 14th June, application was made to the Admiralty to provide a

convoy to sail with the troops then under orders from Cork, on the arrival of lieutenant general sir Arthur Wellesley, appointed to the command.—On the 21st June, lord Castlereagh acquaints sir Arthur Wellesley that accounts from Cadiz are bad, and general Spencer was returning to Gibraltar, and that the cabinet postpone their instructions to him till more is known.—On the 28th of June, lord Castlereagh acquaints general Spencer, then supposed at Gibraltar, that Sir Arthur Wellesley, with nine thousand men, is ordered to proceed from Cork, and to act with his (Spencer's) corps, in support of the Spanish nation. He is, therefore, with his corps, to go off to Cadiz to wait for him; in the meantime, availing himself of any circumstance that offers of acting to advantage, even within the Straits.—It appears that, on the 12th July, lieut. general sir Arthur Wellesley sailed from Cork with 9,000 men, (under instructions of the 30th June) generally to aid the Spanish nation, and the principal object to attack the French in the Tagus; but authorised, as he understood, to pursue any other object, if more likely to conduce to the benefit of the two nations. And (of the 15th July) to endeavour, if possible, not only to expel the enemy from Lisbon, but to cut off their retreat towards Spain. He arrived at Corunna the 20th, communicated with the Galician Junta, who wished the troops to be employed in expelling the French from Portugal, and recommended him to land in that country (this was on the 26th communicated to general Spencer). Sailed from Corunna the 22d, went to Oporto, (leaving the fleet off Cape Finisterre), arrived the 24th, desired by sir Charles Cotton to leave the troops at Oporto or Mondego bay, and come to the Tagus to communicate. Had a conference with the generals and bishop, at Oporto, about the disposal of their force. The bishop promised mules and other means of carriage, and also a sufficiency of slaughter cattle.—It appears that sir Arthur Wellesley sailed from Oporto the 25th July, ordered the transports to go to Mondego, proceeded and joined the admiral off the Tagus the 26th. Letters were received from general Spencer at Cadiz, which had returned, and where the Spaniards pressed him to remain, and he expected* orders from sir Arthur Wellesley. Agreed with sir Charles Cotton, that landing in the mouth of the Tagus was impracticable, and unadvisable, as there was great risk from the state of the surf, from the defences and adverse nature of the coast, and from the neighbourhood of the

enemy's whole disposable force, to whose attack we should be exposed in landing, probably in a crippled state, certainly not in a very efficient one.—Peniche fortress was in possession of the enemy. Mondego bay was therefore agreed on as most eligible to land at. Thinking it most important to drive the French from Portugal, he ordered general Spencer to embark (with his 5,000 men), and join off that coast. By his information of the 24th June, the French had more than 20,000 men in Portugal. The admiral's account made them less. Sir Arthur Wellesley thought they had not less than from 16 to 18,000.—It appears, that sir Arthur Wellesley quitted the admiral off the Tagus, on the 27th, and joined the transports off Mondego, on the 30th. He there received information from government (dated 15th July), that a reinforcement of brigadier general Ackland and five thousand men was intended for him, and eventually ten thousand more men, under lieutenant general sir John Moore; That sir Hew Dalrymple was to command the army: That sir Arthur Wellesley was also to proceed on the instructions he had received, viz. the attack of Lisbon, if his force was sufficient. Dupont having surrendered, general Spencer's arrival was now considered as certain, and also that of general Ackland very soon. The insurrection in Alentejo was a fortunate occurrence at this time, and sir Arthur Wellesley also received information from the secretary of state, dated 15th July, that sir Hew Dalrymple was appointed to the command of the forces in Spain and Portugal, and sir Harry Burrard second in command; and if, in the meantime, he was joined by any officer, senior in rank, he (sir Arthur Wellesley) was to serve under him. Of the same date, sir Harry Burrard was also acquainted by the secretary of state that operations are intended to be directed, in the first instance, to the reduction of the Tagus, and secondly, to the security of Cadiz, and destruction of the enemy's force in Andalusia.—It appears, that sir Arthur Wellesley was induced, from various strong reasons, as stated in his narrative, to disembark in Mondego bay. This commenced on the 1st of August; but the surf occasioned great difficulties, so that his corps was not all landed before the 5th. General Spencer arrived on the 5th, and his corps on the 6th. They landed on the 7th and 8th.—It appears, that from the 1st August till the 8th, when the whole was disembarked, that measures were taking for the immediate moyement of the army towards Lisbon, and horses and carriages were solicited. Sir Ar-

thur Wellesley armed the Portuguese troops, offered money to assist in equipping them for the field, which was declined by their general officers, whom he met on the 7th, and arranged a plan of operations and march, which was delayed, at their desire, and for their convenience, till the 10th. He also left full information of his situation, intentions, and other circumstances, for lieut. general sir Harry Burrard, on his arrival at Mondego (and for whom he had previously sent advices at the Berlings, off Peniche, in case of his making that point), and recommended a plan of operations for sir John Moore's corps on its arrival, to act towards Santarem and the Tagus. On the 8th, he renewed his communications to sir Harry Burrard, leaving them at Mondego.—It appears, from the many substantial reasons enumerated in sir Arthur Wellesley's narrative, and with the aid of 6000 Portuguese, from whose co-operation he had reason to expect great advantage, but in which he was subsequently disappointed, that he determined to proceed (without waiting for his expected reinforcements, of which he had been apprised) with his own army, of 12,000 men (British) against an enemy who, he knew, could not well produce a greater number in the field. He advanced by the coast road towards Lisbon, for the substantial reason, among others, of preserving his communication with the shipping, from which alone he could derive his bread. Wine could be found in all the villages occupied by the army, and slaughter cattle were furnished by contractors.—It appears, that the army marched on the 9th and 10th of August, from Mondego, having horses, although indifferent, for 18 pieces of cannon, for ammunition great and small, a considerable store of bread, and a moderate hospital establishment. The cavalry, about 400, including 200 Portuguese.—On the 10th and 11th, they arrived at Leyria.—On the 13th, marched to Calveria.—On the 14th, to Alcabaca, where they received bread and oats, landed at Nazareth.—On the 15th, to Caldas, and halted the 16th, receiving further supplies from Nazareth.—It appears, that hitherto the Portuguese had moved on his left, extending towards the Tagus, but they now raised such difficulties about subsistence, and proceeding on the manner sir Arthur Wellesley thought most advisable, that he dispensed with their co-operation, on condition they would send him 1600 men, to be at his disposal, and to whom he was to furnish bread. He also recommended to their general, as a measure of safety, to remain about Caldas, which

they did till after the battle of Vimeira.—On the 17th, there was a very considerable action near Obidos, with a corps of 6000 men, under general Laborde, who had taken post in the defiles, and was forced to retire with considerable loss. This and a small previous action cost us about 480 men. The army was that night at Valla Verde, and on the morning of the 18th, heard of the arrival of general Anstruther's brigade on the coast. On the 18th, the army marched to Lowinha, and on the 19th to Vimeira, where it halted on the 20th.—This day brigadier-general Anstruther's brigade (2400 men) joined, and lieutenant general sir H. Burrard arrived off Maciera in the afternoon.—On the 21st, early in the morning, brigadier-general Ackland's brigade (1750 men) landed and joined the army.—It appears, that when sir A. Wellesley was at Leyria, the enemy had the two considerable advanced corps of Laborde and Loison in their front, which (as he moved on with a Portuguese corps on his left, as far as Alcabaca) fell back towards Lisbon, and joined Junot, who had assembled by the 20th, from 12 to 14,000 men, at Torres Vedras, about eight miles from Vimeira; calculating probably, that the weather might disappoint the landing of Anstruther's and Ackland's brigades, whom he must have espied in the offing on the 19th and 20th. He determined to attack sir Arthur Wellesley's army in its situation at Vimeira, on the 21st, before the junction of so considerable a force. In this enterprise general Junot completely failed. His attack was repelled in the most gallant manner, and with great loss he was obliged to retreat upon Torres Vedras, and Cabeca de Monte Chique, where he endeavoured to re-assemble his troops. The detail of this honourable action, in which we lost 700 men, is given in the Extraordinary Gazette of Sept. 16, published upon this occasion.—It appears that lieutenant-general sir H. Burrard, having on the 21st of July received notice of your majesty's appointment of him as second in command of the forces placed under the command of lieutenant-general sir Hew Dalrymple, and having also received all necessary instructions, went immediately to Portsmouth, embarked on the 27th, and sailed on the 31st, in the Audacious, together with the fleet of transports, containing a corps of 10,000 infantry, commanded by lieut.-gen. sir J. Moore.—After a continuance of contrary wind and bad weather, the fleet was near Cape Finisterre on the 16th of August; and it having been recommended to him, that before he proceeded to the southward of Oporto, he



should himself go there or send another person to collect information, and meet the fleet at sea, he shifted, with several officers of his staff, to the Brazen sloop, and arriving at Oporto on the 17th, learnt that sir A. Wellesley had landed at Mondego, and proceeded along the coast-road to the southward. —On the 18th, he arrived off Mondego, and there found dispatches from sir A. Wellesley, recommending that sir J. Moore's corps should land at Mondego, and march upon Santarem, to confine the movements of the enemy on that side; and also stating that the army must depend on the transports for bread, and that reliance could not be placed on the resources of the country.—The difficulty of equipping and supplying sir J. Moore's corps for an interior operation at a distance from the rest of the army, and thinking that if thus acting separately, towards Santarem, he must have been inferior to the enemy if they chose to push that way; and on inquiry, not having been able to hear of 150 mules promised by the bishop of Oporto, sir H. Burrard was induced for the present to decline the proposed operation.—sir H. Burrard proceeded in the Brazen to the southward, and in the evening of the 19th received information of the action of the 17th, near Obidos. He immediately sent back lieut.-col. Donkin to meet sir J. Moore, and directed him to land in the Mondego Bay; and under a knowledge of sir A. Wellesley's former dispatches (which he transmitted) to act as he thought most beneficial to the service in his support. He also sent off lieut.-col. Carey to land at St. Martines, and to communicate with sir A. Wellesley.—It appears, that sir J. Moore did arrive at Mondego on the 20th—that he began to disembark—that on the 22d he received an order from sir H. Burrard, to re-embark such as he had landed, and proceeded to Maciera—that he arrived on the 24th at Maciera Bay, and that he disembarked his corps on the days from the 25th to the 29th, the several divisions joining the army as they landed.—It appears, that on the evening of the 20th of August, when sir Harry Burrard arrived off the landing place of Maciera, he was going to land, when sir A. Wellesley came on board, gave an account of the general state of things, and ended by saying, that he had intended to march the next morning, by five o'clock, by the Mafra road, the enemy having assembled his forces at Torres Vedras—On detailing the many difficulties to be encountered, such as the impossibility of leaving his victuallers and the shore, for any considerable distance, the inferior number of his

cavalry, and the state of his artillery and carriage horses and mules, the strength of the ground he had to go over, which presented many difficulties, and the very little dependence which could be placed on the Portuguese assistance, sir Harry Burrard, on due consideration of all circumstances, decided, that it was more advantageous to wait for sir J. Moore's reinforcement, than to run any risk of defeating the great object, or of sacrificing a great many men without its complete accomplishment. [In this determination, sir Harry Burrard states, he was confirmed, by the opinions of brigadier-general Clinton and colonel Murray, his adjutant and quarter-master-generals.] He therefore gave orders to sir A. Wellesley accordingly, that the army was not to proceed on the morning of the 21st, and, more especially, as the landing and junction of general Ackland's brigade, on the night of the 20th, was yet unaccomplished and necessarily uncertain.—It appears, that sir A. Wellesley returned to Vimeira, and sir H. Burrard remained on board ship the night of the 20th, to complete his necessary dispatches by the return of the Brazen sloop.—During the night of the 20th, and the morning of the 21st, our patroles gave intelligence of the movements of the enemy; but being inferior in cavalry, they could go to no distance, and their reports were vague. As sir A. Wellesley thought it probable, if he did not attack the enemy, that they would attack him, he prepared to receive them at day-light in the morning, by posting the nine-pounders and strengthening his centre, where he expected the attack, from the manner of the enemy's patrolling.—The enemy first appeared in force on our left, about eight in the morning, and it was soon obvious that their attack would be made on our left, and on our advanced guard before Vimeira; the position of the greater part of the army was immediately changed by an extension to the left. The action commenced, and was concluded in the manner detailed in the Extraordinary Gazette, and terminated in a victory honourable and glorious to the British arms.—It appears that sir Harry Burrard had no information from, or communication with, sir Arthur Wellesley during the night of the 20th; but on the morning of the 21st, about nine o'clock, just as he was approaching the shore, he met an officer, sent by sir Arthur Wellesley, with information, that large bodies of the enemy had been seen moving towards our left.—Sir Harry Burrard proceeded towards Vimeira, with as much expedition as an indifferent horse would allow, on a hilly

road; being two miles and a half from the landing place. He arrived there before ten, at a time that the advanced corps (Anstruther's and Fane's brigades) were vigorously attacked. The officers conducting sir H. Burrard passed through the village, and brought him to sir Arthur Wellesley, on the heights behind the villages, where the left of the army had been originally posted. Here he was informed, saw, and approved of the steps taken by sir Arthur Wellesley to repulse the enemy, and directed him to proceed in the execution of an operation he had so happily and so well begun.—By this time it was evident that the attack upon the village and advanced corps was not meant to be further supported; it was completely repulsed, and the enemy retired in considerable confusion. They were not followed by the infantry, as the troops had received orders not to quit their position, without particular orders from sir Arthur Wellesley. The detachment of the 20th light dragoons alone pursued, but falling in with a superior cavalry, were soon obliged to return with considerable loss. This order had been very properly given, on a consideration that the principal effort of the enemy would still be made on our left, and upon this point the enemy had just opened his cannonade, and the brigade under major-general Ferguson was already engaged at distant musketry. As support arrived, he advanced, and the enemy gave way, abandoning three pieces of cannon. Major-general Ferguson still advanced, and a mile from where the first battery was taken, another also was taken. The enemy finally made an attempt to regain their last battery, but were repulsed by the 71st and 82d regiments and obliged to retire with great loss.—Soon after twelve the firing had ceased, and the enemy's cavalry were seen from our left, in bodies of about 200, by general Ferguson; and about the same time general Spencer saw a line formed, about three miles in front of our centre.—About half past twelve, sir Arthur Wellesley proposed to sir Harry Burrard to advance from his right, with three brigades upon Torres Vedras, and with the other five brigades to follow the enemy, who had been defeated by our left.—It appears that the situation of the army at this moment was—on the right, major-general Hill's brigade, which had not been engaged, was on the height behind Vimeira, and at a distance of above three miles from those of generals Ferguson and Nightingale on the left. In front of Vimeira, and in the centre were the brigades of Anstruther and Fane, which had been warmly engaged. Brigadier-

generals Bowes's and Ackland's brigades were advanced on the heights, towards the left, in support of generals Ferguson and Nightingale. Brigadier-general Craufurd's brigade was detached rather to the rear of the left, about half a mile from major-gen. Ferguson, to support the Portuguese troops, making front in that direction.—It appears, that although the enemy was completely repulsed, the degree of expedition with which a pursuit could be commenced, considering the extended position of the army at that time, and the precaution to be taken against the superior cavalry of the enemy, must have depended on various local circumstances only to be calculated by those upon the spot.—This very circumstance of a superior cavalry retarding our advance, would allow the enemy's infantry, without any degree of risk, to continue their retreat in the most rapid manner, till they should arrive at any given and advantageous point of rallying and formation; nor did sir A. Wellesley, on the 17th of August, when the enemy had not half the cavalry as on the 21st, pursue a more inconsiderable and beaten army with any marked advantage; for he says (*Gazette Extraordinary*)—"The enemy retired with the utmost regularity, and the greatest celerity; and, notwithstanding the rapid advance of the British infantry, the want of a sufficient body of cavalry was the cause of his suffering but little loss in the plain:"—and again, "He succeeded in effecting his retreat in good order, owing principally to my want of cavalry."—It may also be considered, that as the attack on our centre had been repulsed long before that on our left had, the attacking corps, which, as has been observed, was not pursued (but by the 20th dragoons, not exceeding 150), had time (above an hour) to re-assemble, and to occupy such ground as might afterwards facilitate the retreat of their right, and that the enemy were actually and visibly formed in one or more lines at about three miles in front of the centre.—From these and other fair military grounds, as allowed by sir A. Wellesley; from those that occurred in sir H. Burrard's first interview with sir A. Wellesley; from the utmost certainty of the immediate arrival of sir J. Moore's corps, which, if they had not stopped at Mondego bay, would have been at Maceira on the 21st; sir H. Burrard declined making any further pursuit that day, or ordering the army to march next morning early.—[In this opinion sir H. Burrard states brigadier-general Clinton and col. Murray concurred.]—On the 22d, sir H. Dalrymple

arrived and assumed the command of the army.—It appears that lieut.-general sir H. Dalrymple having, on the 7th of August, received your majesty's commands of the 15th July, to take the command of the forces to be employed in Portugal and Spain, and that lieut.-general sir H. Burrard was to be second in command, he sailed with the first fair wind from Gibraltar on the 13th of August, communicated with Lord Collingwood off Cadiz, and on the 19th with admiral sir C. Cotton off the Tagus, from whom he received information of the army under sir A. Wellesley, then landed in Portugal, and also that brigadier-general Ackland, with his brigade, was on the coast, looking for an opportunity of joining him. Sir H. Dalrymple sailing along the coast with an intention of making Mondego bay, heard of the action of the 21st; and that sir H. Burrard was arrived; this determined him to make for Maceira bay, where transports were at anchor. He landed in Maceira bay early in the forenoon of the 22d, proceeded to Vimiera, about two miles and a quarter distant, and after a short conversation with his two predecessors in command, whose instructions were those by which he was to act, he ordered the army to march early in the morning of the 23d, undoubtedly as soon as it could be put in motion after his arrival. It appears that in this situation of things the French general Kellerman arrived about noon of the 22d at Vimeira, with proposals for a suspension of arms, in order to settle a definitive convention for the evacuation of Portugal by the French army. Lieutenant-generals sir Harry Burrard and sir Arthur Wellesley assisted the commander of the forces in the discussions that took place on this subject, and it appearing to them, under all circumstances, as commanding a force acting in alliance with the sovereign of Portugal, and combatting in their country (from whence we then derived no material assistance), against an enemy in actual possession of their capital, their fortresses, and, in a military point of view, of their kingdom, that a convention, or capitulation, if the opportunity offered, which should speedily and honourably expel the French army from Portugal, was expedient and advisable, a cessation of arms was agreed upon, to terminate at 48 hours notice. The leading articles of a convention were also settled, and general Kellerman returned towards Lisbon, about nine at night, with the instrument stated in the extra Gazette of the 16th of Sept. but not to be considered as effectual without the concurrence of admiral sir C. Cotton.—Early

on the 23d, in the morning, lieut.-col. Murray, quarter-master-general, set out with the proposed agreement, to procure the concurrence of the admiral, and returned in the night of the 24th, with sir Charles Cotton's answer, that he could not accede, but that he would enter into treaty with the Russian admirals.—It appears that sir Charles Cotton having declined to sanction the Russian article, the commander of the forces conceived the armistice to end, and determined on sending lieutenant-colonel Murray to announce the recommencement of hostilities, at the end of forty-eight hours, in order, if general Junot chose it, that we might treat on the remaining articles as a basis.—This officer had powers to treat without delay. He had the commander of the forces' letter of the 25th, and certain memoranda of sir Arthur Wellesley, as laid before the board, which shewed the exact footing on which he was to act, as also general Kellerman's sentiments on the Russian question. Early on the 27th, communication was had from general Junot and lieutenant-colonel Murray, that a treaty was in agitation which was answered.—It appears that when the proposed treaty (ratified by general Junot) of the 28th of August, was brought by capt. Dalrymple on the 29th to head-quarters Ramalhal, all the lieutenant-generals (Burrard, Moore, Hope, Fraser, Wellesley) were present, lord Paget excepted (because not long previously summoned.) The proposed treaty was, however, formally discussed. Minutes of proposed alterations were taken by sir A. Wellesley, as laid before the board, and the commander of the forces has no reason to believe that sir J. Moore, or any of the lieutenant-generals that came with him, expressed any disapprobation of the state and terms of the negociation.—The treaty with the alterations proposed were re-transmitted to lieut.-col. Murray.—It appears when the treaty concluded by lieut.-col. Murray on the 30th, was brought by him to Torres Vedras on the 31st for ratification, the lieutenant-generals present were convened, and sir A. Wellesley was sent for. Lord Paget, who was at a distance, did not come, nor did sir A. Wellesley, his corps having marched that morning. The other lieutenant-generals met (Burrard, Moore, Fraser, Hope), the alterations made by lieut.-col. Murray were approved, and the treaty then ratified by the commander of the forces (sir H. Dalrymple) with the approbation of the lieutenant-generals present.—Some of the articles of the treaty of the 28th, before objected to by the lieutenant-

generals were altered in that of the 30th, and some other good alterations had been inserted, not before suggested. A comparison of the treaty of the 28th, and that ratified, will shew the alterations.—The meetings of the lieutenant-generals, the commander of the forces did not call, or consider as regular councils of war. He sought to benefit from their talents and experience, by consulting them on exigent cases, and by pursuing the measure he might himself deem most for the good of your majesty's service, after availing himself of the advantage he might draw from their reasonings, and he does not recollect there was any dissentient opinion on the 31st, as to the ratification of the convention.—It appears that sir J. Moore's corps having arrived at Mondego Bay on the 20th of Aug. began to disembark; that they re-embarked, and arrived off Maciera Bay on the 21st; that from the 25th to the 29th they landed under considerable difficulties, and successively joined the army at Torres Vedras.—It appears that some of the principal advantages to arise from the convention were in the contemplation of the generals.—That it immediately liberated the kingdom of Portugal from the dominion of the French, thereby restoring to the inhabitants their capital and fortresses, their principal seaports, their personal liberty, property, religion, and established government.—That it relieved a great extent of Spanish frontier from all apprehensions of an enemy, and the whole of Spain from that of having an enemy behind them, and allowed all parts of Spain to take more effective measures for its general defence; as well as permitted Portugal immediately to contribute for their mutual support.—That it enabled the British army immediately to enter Spain, if required, by central routes, while it transported the French force to a very distant part of their own coast, far removed from the Spanish frontier.—That it immediately released 4,000 Spanish soldiers, and sent them to the defence of Catalonia; it also released from the Portuguese frontier another body of 2,000 Spanish troops. The Portuguese army also became disposable for the common cause.—To the men of war and transports, which, at this season of the year, with great difficulty could keep their station near the coast, and on whose presence the supplies and operations of the army depended, the opening of the Tagus afforded immediate shelter.—It is further urged by the generals, as much more than probable, that if the enemy had been required to lay down their arms, and sur-

render prisoners of war, they would not have complied; but, if driven to extremity, they would have retired upon Lisbon, reinforced by 6000 Russians, who must have been thus compelled to share their fate; and in the temporary attack of this city, much calamity and destruction must have ensued.—Also, that masters of the Russian fleet, and of the boats and shipping in the Tagus, the passage of the river was ensured to them; that they could have defended, for a considerable time its east bank, and prevented the occupation of the Tagus by our fleet: that, with the strong fortresses of Alentejo in their possession, they could have protracted a destructive war, to the great detriment of Portugal and the Spanish cause, by finding employment for the greater part of the British army, for the remainder of the year, and whose difficulties and losses in such operations must have been very considerable.—It appears, that the forts on the Tagus were taken possession of on* the 2d of September, by the British troops, and the port was then opened to our shipping: that on the 5th the army had its right at St. Juliens, and its left on the heights of Bellas: that on the 8th or 9th a British corps marched into Lisbon, to ensure the tranquillity of that city, during the embarkation of the enemy, who were all sent off (except the last division, purposely detained) before the end of the month, and part of the British army was then actually on its route towards the Spanish frontier.—It appears that, during the discussion, and afterwards during the execution of the Convention, much firmness was shewn in resisting the pretensions and interpretations of the enemy; every stipulation being restricted to its fair, honourable, and grammatical meaning, and the French not allowed to carry off, but obliged to disgorge plunder, which they affected to consider as private property.—It appears that pains were taken to misrepresent and raise a clamour in Portugal against this convention; but when it was generally known, and its effects felt, the people of Lisbon, and of the country, seem to have expressed their gratitude and thanks for the benefits attending it.—It has been urged by sir Hew Dalrymple, and allowed by major-general Spencer, that in Egypt, in 1801 (after the victory of the 21st of March, the French having thrown their whole force into Alexandria and Grand Cairo, about 10,000 men in each place), that at the siege of Alexandria, in August, the country was in the full possession of the British and Turks. The garrison, cut off

from every possibility of relief, and could only have held out some days, when a capitulation was granted to it, September the 2d, as favourable as the Convention of Cintra to the army of Junot (of 24,000 French, and 6000 Russians), and perfectly similar in all the chief articles of men, baggage, artillery, conveyance, &c. ; also, that the same terms had been previously granted to the garrison of Cairo, under much the same circumstances. By these two conventions, or capitulations, about 20,000 French evacuated Egypt, and the British army was left disposable for other purposes.—On the whole it appears, that the operations of the army under sir Arthur Wellesley, from his landing in Mondego Bay the 1st of August, until the conclusion of the action at Vimiera, the 21st of August, were highly honourable and successful, and such as might be expected from a distinguished general, at the head of a British army of 13,000 men, augmented on the 20th and 21st to 17,000, deriving only some small aid from a Portuguese corps (1600 men), and against whom an enemy, not exceeding 14,000 men in the field, was opposed; and this before the arrival of a very considerable reinforcement from England, under lieut.-general sir John Moore, which, however, did arrive and join the army, from the 25th to the 30th of August.—It appears a point on which no evidence adduced can enable the board to pronounce, with confidence, whether or not a pursuit after the battle of the 21st, could have been efficacious; nor can the Board feel confident to determine on the expedience of a forward movement to Torres Vedras, when sir Harry Burrard has stated weighty considerations against such a measure. Further, it is to be observed, that so many collateral circumstances could not be known in the moment of the enemy's repulse, as afterwards became clear to the army, and have been represented to the board. And considering the extraordinary circumstances under which two new commanding generals arrived from the ocean, and joined the army (the one during, and the other immediately after, a battle, and those successively superseding each other, and both the original commander within the space of 24 hours), it is not surprising that the army was not carried forward, until the second day after the action, from the necessity of the generals being acquainted with the actual state of things, and of their army, and proceeding accordingly.—It appears that the Convention of Cintra in all its progress and conclu-

sion, or at least all the principal articles of it, were not objected to by the five distinguished lieutenant-generals of that army; and other general officers who were on that service, whom we have had an opportunity to examine, have also concurred in the great advantages that were immediately gained, to the country of Portugal, to the army and navy, and to the general service, by the conclusion of the Convention at that time.—On a consideration of all circumstances, as set forth in this Report, we most humbly submit our opinion, that no further military proceeding is necessary on the subject. Because, howsoever some of us may differ in our sentiments respecting the fitness of the convention in the relative situation of the two armies, it is our unanimous declaration, that unquestionable zeal and firmness appear throughout to have been exhibited by lieut.-general sir Hew Dalrymple, sir Harry Burrard, and sir Arthur Wellesley, as well as that the ardour and gallantry of the rest of the officers and soldiers, on every occasion during this expedition, have done honour to the troops, and reflected lustre on your majesty's arms.—All which is most dutifully submitted.—(Signed) DAVID DUNDAS, general.—MOIRA, general.—PETER CRAIG, general.—HEATHFIELD, general.—PEMBROKE, lieut.-gen.—G. NUGENT, lieut.-gen.—OL. NICOLLS, lieut.-gen.

Judge Advocate General's Office, Dec. 27, 1808.—In consequence of the following letter from his royal highness the commander-in-chief to general sir David Dundas, as president, viz.

Horse Guards, Dec. 25, 1808.
Sir, The judge advocate general having delivered to me to be laid before his majesty, the several papers and documents, containing all the examinations and proceedings taken before the Board of Inquiry, of which you are the president, together with your report and opinion upon the whole of the late operations of his majesty's forces in Portugal, as connected with the armistice and subsequent convention of Cintra, I think it incumbent on me to state to you, that although the Report is fully detailed, and perfectly explanatory of all the transactions as they appeared in evidence before you; yet upon a due consideration of the whole matter, it certainly appears that your opinion upon the conditions of the armistice and convention, which the words of his majesty's warrant expressly enjoin should be strictly examined, inquired into, and reported upon, has been altogether omitted.—I feel it my duty, therefore, to call your attention to these two

principal features of this important case, the armistice and convention, and to desire that you may be pleased to take the same again into your most serious consideration, and subjoin to the opinion which you have already given upon the other points submitted to your examination and inquiry, whether, under all the circumstances which appear in evidence before you, on the relative situation of the two armies, on the 22d of August, 1808; it is your opinion that an armistice was advisable, and if so, whether the terms of that armistice were such as ought to have been agreed upon; and whether, upon a like consideration of the relative situation of the two armies subsequent to the armistice, and when all the British forces were landed, it is your opinion that a Convention was advisable, and if so, whether the terms of that convention were such as ought to have been agreed upon.—I am the more desirous that you should resume the consideration of these two points, the armistice and convention, as it appears upon the face of your Report, that a difference of opinion exists among the members of the board, which may probably produce a dissent from the majority upon these very questions. You will be pleased, therefore, to desire such of the members as may be of a different opinion from the majority upon these two questions, to record upon the face of the proceedings their reasons for such dissent.—I am, Sir, yours, (Signed) FREDERICK, commander-in-chief.—*Gen. Sir D. Dundas, K. B.*

The board met this day at the judge-advocate general's office, when the said letter having been read, they agreed that the following questions should be put to each of the members of the board.

Do you, or do you not, approve of the armistice as concluded on the 22d of August, 1808, in the relative situation of the two armies?

Approve.—Lt.-gen. Nicolls; lt.-gen. sir G. Nugent; earl of Pembroke; lord Heathfield; general Craig; gen. sir D. Dundas.

Disapprove.—Earl of Moira.

Do you, or do you not, approve of the convention as concluded upon the 31st of August, 1808, in the relative situation of the two armies?

Approve.—Lt.-gen. sir G. Nugent; gen. lord Heathfield; general Craig; gen. sir D. Dundas.

Disapprove.—Lt.-gen. Nicolls; earl of Pembroke; earl of Moira.

(Signed) DAVID DUNDAS, President.

My reason for considering the armistice as advisable on the 22d of August was, because the enemy had been able to retire after

the battle of the 21st, and take up a strong defensive position.—OL. NICOLLS, L. G.

I think, considering the great increase of our force, from the first suspension of hostility to the definitive signing of the convention, added to the defeat the enemy had suffered, sir Hew Dalrymple was fully entitled to have insisted upon more favourable terms.—OL. NICOLLS, L. G.

I approve of the armistice after a due consideration of the relative situations of the two armies on the evening of the 22d of August, but I cannot fully approve of the whole of the convention, after a due consideration of the relative situation of the two armies at that time; because it does not appear to me that, in the progress of the negociation, sufficient stress was laid upon the great advantages which had resulted, or were likely to result, from the former successful operations of the British army in the field, from the considerable reinforcements which had joined it, subsequent to the commencement of the negociation, from the cause in which the British army was engaged being the cause of Portugal, which gave good reason to reckon upon the goodwill, if not upon the active assistance, of the majority of the inhabitants; and, also, from the unusual readiness which, as it appears to me, was manifested by general Junot to enter into negociation, and by the French negotiator to accede to terms as they were proposed, and to such construction as lieutenant-general sir Hew Dalrymple put upon them in some instances, where they might have borne a difference of interpretation. I therefore think it probable, for the above reasons, that if less favourable terms to the French army had been insisted upon, they would have been acceded to.—PEMBROKE, lieut.-gen.

I feel less awkwardness in obeying the order to detail my sentiments on the nature of the convention, because that I have already joined in the tribute of applause due in other respects to the officers concerned. My opinion, therefore, is only opposed to theirs on a question of judgment, where their talents are likely to have so much more weight, as to render the profession of my difference, even on that point, somewhat painful. The duty is, however, imperious on me not to disguise or qualify the deductions which I have made during this investigation.—An armistice simply might not have been objectionable, because sir Hew Dalrymple, expecting hourly the arrival of sir John Moore's division, might see more advantage for himself in a short suspension of hostilities, than what the French could

draw from it. But as the armistice involved, and in fact established the whole principle of the convention, I cannot separate it from the latter.—Sir A. Wellesley has stated, that he considered his force at the commencement of the march from the Mondego River, as sufficient to drive the French from their positions on the Tagus. That force is subsequently joined by above 4000 British troops, under generals Anstruther and Ackland. The French make an attack with their whole disposable strength, and are repulsed with heavy loss, though but a part of the British army is brought into action. It is difficult to conceive that the prospects which Sir A. Wellesley entertained could be unfavourably altered by these events, even had not the certainty of speedy reinforcements to the British army existed.—It is urged, that had the French been pushed to extremity, they would have crossed the Tagus, and have protracted the campaign in such a manner as to have frustrated the more important view of the British generals —namely, sending succours into Spain.

This measure must have been equally feasible for the French, if no victory had been obtained over them; but I confess that the chance of such an attempt seems to me assayed against probability. Sir Hew Dalrymple notices what he calls “the critical and embarrassed state of Junot,” before that general has been pressed by the British army; and, in explanation of that expression, observes, that the surrender of Dupont, the existence of the victorious Spanish army in Andalusia, which cut off the retreat of the French in that direction, and the universal hostility of the Portuguese, made the situation of Junot one of great distress. No temptation for the translation of the war into Alentejo presents itself from this picture —nor does any other representation give ground to suppose that Junot could have contemplated the measure as holding forth any prospect but ultimate ruin, after much preliminary distress and disgrace. The strongest of all proofs as to Junot’s opinion, arises from his sending, the very morning after the battle of Vimiera, to propose the evacuation of Portugal; a step which sufficiently indicated that he was satisfied he could not only make no effectual defence, but could not even prolong the contest to take the chance of accidents. He seems, indeed, to have been without any real resource.—It appears in evidence, that of the troops left by him in Lisbon and the forts,

a considerable proportion were of very doubtful quality. Those troops on whose fidelity he could confide, had been dismayed by a signal defeat, and they were sensible that they had no succour to look to from abroad. To the British generals it was known, when the armistice was granted, that 10,000 men under Sir J. Moore, as well as the 3d and 42d regiments of foot, with the 18th dragoons, might be immediately reckoned upon; and although much advantage had not been drawn from the Portuguese troops, their support and the general violence of the country against the French, cannot be laid out of this calculation.—The disparity of force and of circumstances was, then, such as could leave no doubt that the issue must be favourable to us. I do not omit advertence to the difficulties urged as possible to occur in furnishing the British army with bread. But, putting aside the obvious solution, that such a temporary privation is not ruinous to an army where cattle can be procured in the country, this difficulty cannot be well pleaded, if admission is to be given to the speculation, that the heavy cannon necessary for battering forts St. Julien and Cascaes were to be got ashore in the bays of the Rock of Lisbon. The question then comes to this, whether the convention did (as has been asserted) secure all the objects which were proposed in the expedition. If it did not, it was not what his majesty was entitled to expect from the relative situation of the two armies.—I humbly conceive it to have been erroneous to regard the emancipation of Portugal from the French, as the sole or the principal object of the expedition.—Upon whatever territory we contend with the French, it must be a prominent object in the struggle to destroy their resources, and to narrow their means of injuring us, or those whose cause we are supporting. This seems to have been so little considered in the convention, that the terms appear to have extricated Junot’s army from a situation of infinite distress, in which it was wholly out of play, and to have brought it in a state of entire equipment, into immediate currency, in a quarter too, where it must interfere with our most urgent and interesting concerns.—Had it been impracticable to reduce the French army to lay down its arms unconditionally, still an obligation not to serve for a specified time might have been insisted upon, or Belleisle might have been prescribed as the place at which they should be landed,

(To be continued.)